United Nations

A/C.3/56/SR.10

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
24 October 2001

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 10th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 15 October 2001, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Oda (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Egypt)

Contents

Agenda item 110: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*)*

Agenda item 111: International drug control (*continued*)*

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

01-58044 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman), Mr. Oda (Egypt), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 110: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/56/3, 83, 151, 155, 222, 380, A/56/402-E/2001/105 and A/56/403)

Agenda item 111: International drug control (*continued*) (A/56/3, 83, 157 and 227)

1. **Ms. Durrant** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that were Members of the United Nations, said that the worldwide drug problem had assumed frightening new proportions in the era of globalization. Traffickers were exploiting new developments which facilitated the free movement of people and goods across borders, and had taken advantage of the technological and communications revolution to consolidate linkages between illicit drugs, money-laundering, traffic in arms and other forms of transnational criminal activities. The need for clear and innovative strategic responses could not be more urgent. The historic Millennium Summit remained a fundamental point of reference for the CARICOM States; it had reaffirmed the global commitment to countering the world drug problem at the highest political level. Achieving measurable results in the fight against crime and illicit drugs required the highest level of international commitment and cooperation and the first steps had been taken. The true test would be the efforts made in coming years to fulfil the goals set.

2. The geographical location of the Caribbean States, with their attractiveness to traffickers as a trans-shipment point for illicit drugs, had compounded regional security concerns, particularly in light of the linkage between drugs, corruption, money-laundering and small arms. The threat to State legitimacy and regional stability arising from criminal activities associated with the drug trade, the effect of drug abuse on the region's youth and the disintegration of communities and social structures were among the most urgent concerns. The small economies of the Caribbean were particularly vulnerable to those problems, and CARICOM had therefore implemented a number of regional and bilateral initiatives aimed at strengthening national capacities to deal with them. Such initiatives were complemented by a broad spectrum of donor-support programmes in the areas of money-laundering, small-arms control and drug-abuse reduction.

3. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and donor Governments played an important role in providing critical technical and financial support in those areas; the traditionally close and active working relationship between the CARICOM States and UNDCP had been a vitally important element in drug-control programmes. As a new policy response, CARICOM had also attempted to focus primary attention on integrating education and health with communication with a view to promoting behavioural change and demand reduction, particularly among young people. An intergovernmental task force on drugs had been established as the regional coordinating mechanism to formulate an integrated counter-narcotics policy. The task force was collaborating with several regional partners in the wider Caribbean area, and maritime cooperation was a primary element in that effort.

4. Trafficking in drugs was both a manifestation and a source of social and economic burdens, which threatened the sustainable development of States and, by extension, the maintenance of law and order, sustainable peace and personal security. If the international community was to achieve success in the fight against drugs, the development agenda must be a primary and fundamental point of departure. The CARICOM States were acutely aware that poverty, social and economic disparities and development concerns arising from constraints on international trade and disadvantageous economic and financial structures must become a primary pillar of the response by the international community. Where international economic and trading regimes contributed to undermining growth and development, the resulting social dislocation, unemployment and economic stagnation were likely to fuel the traffic in drugs as an alternative source of income generation. There was therefore an economic and moral imperative to address the drug problem on all fronts. Given the role of poverty in contributing to the drug trade, CARICOM also wished to signal the urgency of highlighting alternative development as a primary policy focus. The international community must develop and improve efforts to integrate the most vulnerable social sectors involved in the illicit drug trade through legal and viable economic activities. Regrettably, the role of

UNDCP in promoting such programmes had often been hampered by the lack of resources.

5. The changing nature of organized crime threatened stability, democracy and development. Organized criminal groups now had at their disposal new and more effective tools optimizing their efficiency in perpetuating the most heinous criminal activities. Those networks were more flexible, organized and efficient, better financed, more technologically advanced and harder to detect. The tragic events of 11 September 2001 were a painful reminder of the devastation and mass destruction that criminals could wreak if they were not stopped through effective global responses. A number of CARICOM States had recently signed the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, annexed to General Assembly resolution 55/25. While the Convention did not explicitly address the link between terrorist groups and organized criminal networks, it created a useful platform for improving the fight against crime, and her delegation looked forward to further international efforts to address the scourge of terrorism. The Convention should also be a catalyst for the elaboration of a comprehensive international instrument against corruption, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/61.

6. Success in the fight against transnational organized crime depended largely on the ability of States to achieve equitable growth, integrate themselves into the global economy in a manner consistent with their economic and social policy objectives and ensure that their populations benefited equitably from new opportunities for empowerment and technological advancement. An effective battle against transnational organized crime could not be carried on in an environment in which local institutional capacity was constrained by lack of expertise, as in many developing countries. She therefore welcomed the inclusion in the Convention of provisions to enhance capacity-building, technical assistance and information exchange among States parties.

7. Crime prevention in the Caribbean region had been seriously compounded by the flow of illicit arms. The time had come for the international community to consider measures to limit weapons production to levels that met defence and national-security needs. CARICOM firmly supported domestic and international regulations to stem the leakage of trade in legal weapons to illegal markets. In conclusion, she placed on record the appreciation of CARICOM member States for the support given by UNDCP to government efforts to combat transnational organized crime and illegal drugs.

8. **Mr. Xie** Bohua (China) said that illicit drugs were the enemy of human society, affecting development, social stability and mankind's future. Over the years, the international community had achieved encouraging results in combating production of and trafficking in illicit drugs and reducing demand for them. In general, however, cultivation, production and consumption of illicit drugs were spreading. As the world economy became ever more globalized, drug-related crimes were taking on an organized, international and professional character. It was imperative for the international community to recognize the phenomenon for what it was and adopt timely countermeasures, strengthen international cooperation against drugs and combat drug-related crimes.

9. The special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug programme together had set out measures and goals which his Government had made great efforts to implement. In 1999 China had launched nationwide activities with the theme "a drug-free community", focusing on youth education, prevention and increased efforts to reduce demand. In 2000, his Government had issued a white paper on combating illicit drugs, comprehensively laying out its position, measures taken and achievements. During the current year, China's law-enforcement authorities had adopted a policy of cutting off the source and stopping the flow of illicit drugs and had achieved outstanding results. In the first half of 2001, 6.2 tons of heroin and 2.9 tons of "ice" had been confiscated.

10. Illicit drugs were a social problem closely related to all aspects of social life. Combating illicit drugs required participation by society as a whole. Relying on social strengths, resorting to legal, administrative, economic and educational means, and adopting a holistic approach were all effective ways to tackle the problem of illicit drugs. However, it was also a global problem requiring international cooperation. China participated actively in such cooperation, working closely with UNDCP and with many other countries. His Government continued to strengthen its cooperation with the Lao People's Democratic

Republic, Myanmar and Thailand in combating illicit drugs, and a ministerial meeting on the subject, attended by the four countries, had taken place in Beijing in August 2001 to establish partnership among them and to stipulate specific areas of cooperation.

11. A resolute struggle against illicit drugs had always been his Government's position. As long as there were illicit drugs, the struggle would not cease. China was ready to join other countries in striving to eradicate that scourge and create a drug-free future for mankind.

12. **Mr. Osmane** (Algeria) said it was widely recognized that drug abuse and trafficking posed a grave danger to humanity, particularly young people and children. International efforts in response to that threat, particularly those agreed on at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, reflected widespread awareness of the need to take global, integrated action to reduce drug abuse and eliminate illicit trafficking. The various measures agreed on, particularly the creation at the national, regional and international levels of strategies and plans of action, required widespread support to the countries involved in the struggle as well as the promotion at the international level of legal cooperation and strengthening of cross-border controls.

13. His delegation was pleased to note that national strategies to eliminate the cultivation of illicit crops through substitution had received bilateral and multilateral support, with very encouraging results. The latter were, however, geographically limited and concerned only certain types of drugs. In Africa, for example, hopes to eliminate illicit crops such as cannabis were handicapped by lack of international financing and technical support. Moreover, its deteriorating economic situation, worsening poverty and armed conflicts had fed various kinds of illicit and speculative activities. The African States had decided to face their responsibilities and tackle the scourge at the local and regional levels. Within the framework of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), a five-year plan had been adopted at Algiers in February 2000. The plan recommended to OAU member States that they should ratify the various United Nations drug conventions and set up legal-cooperation programmes. That plan should be fully supported by the United Nations system, particularly UNDCP, which should be congratulated for the remarkable work it was achieving.

14. Although it had not reached alarming proportions in Algeria, the abuse and trafficking in drugs were a matter of major concern for his Government, which had adopted a series of measures to reduce demand and supply as well as trafficking. A national seminar on the issue of drugs had been held in June 2001 in Algiers, attended by specialists as well as United Nations representatives. Algeria had become a drug-transit country and had repeatedly drawn the international community's attention to the connection between terrorism and organized transnational crime.

15. The recent adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols reflected the determination of the international community to combat criminality in all its forms. His Government fully supported current efforts to prepare a new and effective international legal instrument against corruption, as called for in General Assembly resolution 55/61. Such an instrument must not neglect aspects related to the illicit transfer or repatriation of funds.

16. Transnational crime represented a real danger to the stability of human society. It endangered public health, general well-being, the full enjoyment of human rights and the security of goods and persons. Algeria — itself affected by a particularly violent form of terrorism with well-known international ramifications — was determined to take part in all coordinated and collective measures enabling humanity as a whole to deal with such threats.

17. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan) said that her delegation considered international drug control a joint responsibility that required an integrated, balanced approach fully in accord with the purposes and principles of the United Nations as set forth in the Charter and in international law, and in particular, full respect for all human rights and for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. The Sudan, as a party to the international drug-control conventions, joined the international community in calling for the use of every means to fight the drug scourge nationally and internationally.

18. The use of laundered funds derived from drug traffic for illegal activities, such as the financing of armed rebel movements against legitimate Governments, jeopardized international peace and security, as could be seen in Africa in the aggravation

of struggles in which such movements were playing the primary role in destroying peace. Cooperation between the international community and the competent United Nations organizations was essential in order to identify and dry up those sources of funds and tackle the drug issue with determination in accordance with the relevant international instruments.

19. Her country was one of the few in which the drug problem had not reached dangerous proportions, though its geographic situation would seem to invite the use of its land for drug transit and contraband. The Sudan's efforts in that sphere included the enactment of a number of drug-control laws, some of which provided the death penalty for the crime of drug trafficking.

20. The Sudan had created numerous organs to combat crime, was a member of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and had acceded to all the international treaties on international cooperation against crime, including those on money-laundering and trafficking in human organs. It had signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and supported national and international efforts to eradicate organized crime and accelerate the implementation of the recommendations of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. Her delegation also supported the drafting of an effective international legal instrument against corruption, especially since funds obtained by corrupt means by certain rebel movements helped perpetuate the illegal activities of those movements.

21. **Mr. Moniaga** (Indonesia) said that great strides had been made in the global response to combat the global scourges of crime and drugs; cooperation and coordination had been strengthened at the international, regional and bilateral levels. His delegation hoped that the important legal instruments adopted recently would enable the international community to address crime prevention in a global manner and that the transnational measures agreed upon would provide a firm foundation for a truly global response.

22. The United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention had played an important role in supporting the elaboration and ratification of international legal instruments. It should continue to receive sufficient support in its effort to provide technical assistance to Governments in curbing corruption. Equally important to his delegation was the General Assembly's decision in resolution 55/61 to convene an intergovernmental expert group to prepare draft terms of reference for the negotiation of a future legal instrument against corruption. It was his delegation's firm belief that with strong political will and a spirit of working together, a United Nations convention against corruption would materialize by the year 2003. Indonesia was fully committed to that end.

23. For some time, his Government had been making a strenuous effort to extract the cancer of corruption from Indonesian society. In a recent address to Parliament, the President had addressed past difficulties in eradicating such practices which had led to a crisis sweeping the nation since 1997. That was now coming to an end. At the President's request all Cabinet members and thousands of high-ranking officials were required to report their wealth to the State Officials Wealth Audit Commission.

24. Recent events had directed additional attention to the problem of terrorism. Indonesia stood firmly with the international community, through the United Nations, in fighting against terrorism and the senseless death and destruction wrought upon innocent people. His delegation welcomed the cooperation established between the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the Centre for International Crime Prevention and research institutions and other actors in the prevention of terrorism. Its efforts would be given even greater impetus in its preparation of a global survey on terrorism. Close cooperation between that Branch and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism would be an important element in efforts to combat terrorism.

25. His delegation would continue to support the goals agreed on at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug problem together. Indonesia was deeply concerned at the rise of drug abuse among young people, exacerbated by increased unemployment and the political and social insecurity that had permeated Indonesia in recent years. His Government would continue to support international efforts to combat multilateral criminal enterprises and eradicate illicit drugs. Indonesia continued to recognize the threat that those scourges represented for developing countries and the drain on resources that would be better spent

on social and economic development and the betterment of society.

26. **Mr. Tupy Caldas de Moura** (Brazil) said that, over the past year, the most significant of several positive developments in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice had been the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols, all of which had been signed by Brazil. The record number of signatures at the signing conference gave a strong signal of the international community's commitment. The United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention had collaborated closely with Brazil by providing technical cooperation, particularly for implementing academic programmes on criminal justice, and a regional branch of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention had been established in Brazil.

27. At the regional level, the illegal possession of and trafficking in firearms had been identified as a major factor in fomenting violence and criminality during a regional meeting in Brazil in December 2000. It had been decided to create a working group to study harmonization of legislation, regulation of trade in firearms and ammunition, and linkages between trafficking in drugs and in firearms and ammunition. At the national level, Brazil had used studies and documents from the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and from the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the elaboration and implementation of the national public-security plan adopted in July 2000, which had already produced good results.

28. In the area of international drug control, recent reports had highlighted achievements in reducing the drug supply resulting from measures that considered the global drug problem to be a shared responsibility. That had played a significant role in the success of national strategies to eliminate illicit drug crops. Aided by international cooperation, Brazil had implemented a consistent policy to combat illicit drug consumption and trafficking, and related crimes. In September 2000, it had hosted the first-ever summit of South American Presidents, at which drugs and related crimes had been a main theme; it had also taken part in various other relevant regional initiatives.

29. At the national level, the State's administrative structures were being modernized and legislation was being updated in order to enhance the capacity to deal with the drug problem in all its complexity, including money-laundering. In that respect, Brazil had joined the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, which had ranked Brazil one of the ten countries to fully implement its recommendations. However, synthetic drugs were playing a growing role in the overall drug problem and, unfortunately, there had been less progress in tackling illegal drug trafficking and abuse than in the area of drug supply. However, there were encouraging signs that progress was possible and that consensual strategies were correct.

30. **Ms. Molaroni** (San Marino) said there appeared to be a certain indifference towards the drug problem. That was unforgivable as it could hamper progress in resolving a problem that required action on all fronts, through collaboration among civil society, Governments and international organizations.

31. Following the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, San Marino had set about signing and ratifying all the international conventions on drugs. It was ready to support common actions that included supply and demand reduction, involvement of all social components, increased information at all levels, and international cooperation in the legal, customs and security fields.

32. San Marino was committed to combating money-laundering. The horrendous events of 11 September had provided evidence of the connection between organized crime, drug-trafficking and terrorism and gave added reason to adopt rigorous national control systems to prevent money-laundering.

33. Drug abuse endangered the development of the younger generation, fostering social exclusion and crime; consequently, San Marino was against any form of liberalizing drugs. Given that some of its youth were addicted, San Marino recognized the importance of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 54/132. San Marino felt that, in modern society it was also important to restore the role of the family as a point of reference.

34. National efforts to stop drug demand and trafficking were insufficient; it was necessary to deal with the problem of production, which was more

serious because it involved one of the world's greatest scourges: poverty. In several of the poorest countries, the only solution was to provide alternative means of improving the standard of living.

35. **Mr. Priputen** (Slovakia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. Slovakia attached great importance to the activities of the United Nations in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. It had signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which, together with its three protocols, would be of major importance in the fight against organized crime and should enter into force as soon as possible. A pilot seminar on fighting organized crime and corruption for Slovak participants had been held in Bratislava in September 2001 as a follow-up activity.

36. Slovakia fully supported all steps towards the elaboration of an effective and binding international legal instrument against corruption. However, it should ensure the equal commitment of all the parties and the monitoring mechanism must be effective, while retaining a certain degree of flexibility.

37. Globalization had greatly facilitated the growth of transnational organized crime, including trafficking in human beings, which had increased sharply in Europe over the last decade. His delegation welcomed the willingness of the Centre for International Crime Prevention to begin implementing an Eastern European anti-trafficking project in the Slovak Republic, with the principal objective of improving the response of criminal justice.

38. Universal cooperation should be supported by adequate measures at the regional level. The regional branch of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention in Bratislava, which operated with financial assistance from the Slovak Government, should contribute to the fight against organized crime and provide for an even stronger partnership between the Office and the countries of Central Europe.

39. **Mr. Millo** (Israel) said it was encouraging that UNDCP had made progress in reducing illicit drug production. However, it was of great concern that money generated by drug trafficking continued to move around the world so easily and with such devastating effects. Illicit drugs were a major challenge for individuals as well as States. Israel was committed to all the international conventions on drug abuse and illicit trafficking and its government institutions and non-governmental organizations were endeavouring to minimize the terrible effects of the problem.

40. Over the past year, Israel had developed new therapeutic models for drug addiction and had enacted a law against money-laundering. For almost a decade, it had been trying to foster regional cooperation with its neighbours, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians, to combat the drug problem more effectively; such cooperation should be supported by UNDCP. Plans existed to provide technical assistance to the Palestinians to combat drug-trafficking in the areas under their control; such measures could be implemented once the security situation improved. Israel had also been offering training in combating drug abuse to professionals from developing countries for several years. Lastly, the assistance of UNDCP was needed to help upgrade the operational capabilities of the Israeli Police to prevent illicit trafficking across the country's borders.

41. **Ms. Grollová** (Czech Republic) said that her delegation fully supported the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. However, since the Czech Republic was currently chairing the forty-fourth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, she wished to add certain comments.

42. The documents adopted by the twentieth special session of the General Assembly had guided the work of the Commission. Within the follow-up process, the Commission had reviewed the first biennial report of the Executive Director of UNDCP on the progress achieved by Governments to meet the targets for the years 2003 and 2008, and had reviewed how the reporting process could be improved in order to increase clarity and compatibility in future monitoring.

43. The follow-up to the special session had represented a major substantive change in the work of the Commission. In order to fulfil its mandate, since March 2000 it had divided its agenda into an operational and a normative segment. In addition, for the first time, it had held a thematic debate with international experts, which had enabled it to move away from the national statements traditionally presented during the general debate towards a more dynamic, interactive discussion on specific issues.

44. During its forty-fourth session, the Commission had identified the following priorities to further strengthen the role of UNDCP as the central coordinator of international drug control efforts: curtailing drug demand, increasing support to Governments to counter the threat posed by synthetic drugs, and increasing attention to countering the drug problem in Africa, without neglecting other regions.

45. In view of international efforts to combat terrorism pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), it would be necessary to give greater attention to UNDCP activities relating to the strategy for Afghanistan. Assistance to countries combating drug trafficking in the Central Asian region should be increased immediately and the strategy adjusted to reflect new developments.

46. Another innovation under the Czech chairmanship of the Commission had been its inter-sessional meetings, giving members an opportunity to receive up-to-date information and exchange views on pertinent issues. Regular meetings had also been held between the bureau of the Commission and the Executive Director of UNDCP, and there had been mutually beneficial interaction between the Commission and the International Narcotics Control Board.

47. Voluntary contributions to the UNDCP Fund accounted for 93 per cent of all resources available to the United Nations for drug control, the rest being provided out of the regular budget. That was the single most important factor determining its work, since such contributions increasingly tended to be earmarked. Should that trend be reversed, UNDCP would have greater flexibility to react to the rapidly changing needs of countries in their struggle against drugs.

48. While fulfilling its mandate to provide policy directives to UNDCP, the Commission had taken new initiatives to broaden the dialogue on projects between donor and recipient countries. It had also paid increasing attention to UNDCP management, and the ongoing internal reforms within UNDCP would, it was hoped, restore the confidence of member nations.

49. **Mr. Andrabi** (Pakistan) said that drug trafficking and organized crime were interdependent and posed serious challenges to a country's national security and social stability. Globalization had given a new dimension to that linkage: drug cartels and organized criminal groups had taken advantage of the deregulation of capital and financial markets, "soft" borders, easier means of communication and advanced information technologies. The daunting task of countering their activities had acquired added importance in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks on the United States.

50. His delegation shared the concern of the Executive Director of the United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention that the ban on poppy cultivation by the Taliban in Afghanistan would be difficult to sustain on account of the latest military strikes in that country and the consequent suspension of emergency humanitarian aid; it would like the Office to monitor the situation in Afghanistan and report to the Commission on Narcotics Drugs. His delegation agreed with the Executive Director's recommendations that the international community should increase support to Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and other Central Asian countries which were vulnerable to the destabilizing effects of drug trafficking and drug abuse.

51. It was satisfying to learn from the Secretary-General's exhaustive reports that illicit cultivation of narcotics had been eradicated in several countries through alternative development, and that special emphasis was being placed on synergies between law enforcement policies, control measures and drug demand reduction. There should be no limitation on new mandates since they were necessary to address emerging challenges. With regard to the prevention of corrupt practices, the Secretary-General's suggestion that the United Nations system could assist Member States with the transfer and return of ill-gotten funds was encouraging, as was the possibility of assistance in capacity-building for case management.

52. Pakistan remained committed to the objectives identified at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. It had sustained its zero poppy-cultivation status for the second year running as a result of development intervention and firm enforcement action with active participation by community-based organizations. In order to consolidate its gains and counter the increase in opium-poppy prices due to zero production in Pakistan and the ban on cultivation in Afghanistan, several high-yield development projects were being planned in areas where poppy had been grown.

53. Stricter banking procedures were required to be adopted to counter money-laundering, which provided a lifeline to transnational organized crime. The National Accountability Bureau and the Prudential Regulations of the State Bank of Pakistan, however, had had success in detecting illegal wealth and money-laundering. All financial institutions were currently obliged to report all suspicious money transactions and an expert body was being created for their investigation.

54. Pakistan had always supported international cooperation against transnational crime. It was determined to make the country drug- and weapon-free once more and had taken vigorous steps to bring that about in the form of a de-weaponization campaign and anti-money-laundering action.

55. **Ms. Taracena** (Guatemala) said that her delegation supported the statements by Chile on behalf of the Rio Group and El Salvador on behalf of the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic with reference to their action to combat the drug problem in the southern hemisphere and subregionally. That problem was a matter of particular concern to her Government, not only in view of its direct consequences but also because of its links with violence, the economic power of criminal organizations, institutional and social corruption, and the activities of the international mafia and terrorism.

56. Guatemala had a number of high-level government bodies concerned with combating drug addiction and trafficking, and they maintained close contact with the International Narcotics Control Board and the UNDCP. The Narcotics Bureau of the Public Prosecutor's Office was active in the implementation of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and was responsible for obtaining regional and international cooperation. A Guatemalan drug-monitoring centre had also been set up to provide information, sponsored by the Government of Spain and the Inter-American Commission for Drug Abuse Control of the Organization of American States (OAS).

57. Guatemala was also engaged in demand-reduction activities, focusing on preventive education and community self-management to increase awareness of drug addiction and its consequences. The Government was collaborating with the non-governmental sector in the implementation of the National Master Plan, while a bill on money-laundering had been brought before Congress and would contribute significantly to combating drug trafficking.

58. At the regional level, bilateral agreements had been signed by Guatemala and Mexico to improve border controls, and support was being given to all the anti-drug efforts of the OAS through the appropriate mechanisms. Intelligence information and logistical support were being provided through Guatemala's Ministry of Defence to intelligence centres in Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean. In 2000, Guatemala had chaired the Permanent Central American Commission for the Eradication of the Production, Traffic, Consumption and Illicit Use of Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Several of the Commission's bodies had been reactivated and a regional action plan drafted for the reduction of supply and demand.

59. At the multilateral level, her delegation considered that the Third Committee was the ideal forum for reiterating its support for strengthening the mechanisms and procedures adopted by the United Nations for crime prevention and drug control.

60. **Mr. Alcalay** (Venezuela) endorsed the statements made by the delegation of Chile on behalf of the States members of the Rio Group and by the delegation of Bolivia on behalf of the States members of the Andean Community.

61. His Government categorically condemned illicit drug cultivation and consumption, an interdependent sequence of activities in which the countervalues of society were cynically exploited for easy gain. A multidimensional, dynamic and transnational approach was needed to combat that form of corruption on a long-term basis, both at home and abroad.

62. At the national level, the Government had supported far-reaching changes, based on the new Constitution, beginning with transparency in the financing of the political parties and the monitoring of the income and assets of political authorities in order to prevent and combat corruption. In its concern to prevent that corruption from reaching the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, it was also promoting public-sector reforms to improve accountability, eliminate red tape and reorganize the system in order to achieve greater transparency in government decision-making.

63. At the international level, his Government supported international cooperation, particularly with the United Nations, in setting up efficient monitoring systems to prevent corruption and introducing sanctions to eradicate corrupt practices. It favoured the elaboration within the United Nations of an international instrument to combat corruption and systematize the relevant provisions of various existing legal instruments, given its experience in negotiations on the Inter-American Convention against Corruption.

64. With reference to the criminal misuse of information technology, his Government favoured a multilateral approach to improving security through collective action to permit cooperation in identifying and prosecuting persons committing criminal acts in cyberspace. General Assembly resolution 55/63 on that issue was a first step towards adopting global initiatives which could lead to an international legal instrument. The Venezuelan National Assembly had been working on an act to combat information-technology crimes, covering the protection of State security, the rights of citizens and the privacy of communications. It contained sanctions for a series of such offences and would be adopted in the very near future.

65. The Venezuelan National Assembly was in the process of debating, with a view to its ratification, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime signed by Venezuela in December 2000. That instrument was of fundamental importance in that Venezuela's geographical location facilitated the drug trafficking, money-laundering and abduction activities of the international criminal organizations but also facilitated action against those groups for the same geographical reasons.

66. Where drugs were concerned, Venezuela had focused its national strategy not only on the control, prohibition and suppression of drug trafficking, but also on prevention, rehabilitation and social reintegration, the investigation and control of funds, and the control of chemical precursors. More recently, attention had focused on prevention and education and on drug-abuse trends among children and young people — especially street children, whose situation left them particularly exposed. Drug abuse was occurring at an increasingly early age; preventive policies must therefore be accompanied by the mobilization of the community, solidarity in action, collaboration with parents and teachers, and the participation of institutions which could communicate appropriately with the sectors affected. Internationally, the problem must be tackled on the basis of equality, reciprocity, shared responsibility and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, but bearing in mind the gravity of drug abuse for mankind as a whole. Venezuela further considered that the complex question of the movement of illegal drug crops should receive more cooperation from the international community so that it could be controlled through joint efforts.

67. Venezuela considered that the principle of shared responsibility should include action against drug trafficking. States affected should receive support and cooperation from the international community so that a balanced approach would enable joint action to be taken to prevent drug trafficking from generating the crimes often associated with it. That would lead to the creation of a new international ethos of which the fight against drugs would be a cornerstone.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.